Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 20 (which corresponds to paragraph [0003] in the application's publication document) as follows:

> Within the modern economy, the transportation of goods and products is increasingly critical to the success of an organization. For example, businesses that operate on the Internet typically must transport goods to customers with every order. For these Internet businesses, [[business,]] transportation is not merely a simple business function that must be managed, but rather a strategic function that influences revenue generation and customer satisfaction. More specifically, a business having relatively higher transportation costs and/or relatively slower or less reliable delivery of goods may be at a severe competitive disadvantage. Accordingly, many organizations devote a high level of logistic resources to managing the transportation of goods and products, and, depending on the industry, the management of transportation services may account for up to half of an organizations total logistics cost.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 29 (which corresponds to paragraph [0013] in the application's publication document) as follows:

> In response to the above-described and other needs, the present invention provides electronic shipping and transportation planning, execution and freight payment managers and related methods that are useful to decrease shipment cycle time and cost while increasing services available to an organization and its clients. A first embodiment of the present invention allows organizations to fully optimize transportation operations by facilitating the modeling and management of extremely detailed order requirements and business rules to identify the lowest-cost transportation solutions according to those order requirements and business rules. Additionally, a second embodiment of the present invention

allows organizations to fully optimize transportation operations by facilitating the implementation and management of selected transportation solutions. Further, a third embodiment of the present invention allows organizations to fully optimize transportation operations by facilitating the management of freight movement costs by identifying carrier costs and charging an appropriate client an appropriately allotted amount for the carrier costs. Finally, a preferred embodiment of the present invention allows organizations to fully optimize transportation operations by integrating the management of planning of [[if]] optimized freight movements, execution of planned freight movements, and payment and collection of costs for completed freight movements.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 9 (which corresponds to paragraph [0018] in the application's publication document) as follows:

In such preferred embodiments of the electronic transportation managers of the present invention, three separate yet integrated electronic managers, in the form of networked modules, perform one of each of the above-mentioned business activities. A route planning manager, in the form of a problem-solver module, uses a sophisticated load building algorithm as herein described to identify and compare possible alternative freight movements from various potential route and stop sequences, modes of transport, and carriers. The decision making rules and information the problem-solver uses to make optional decisions regarding pending transportation orders derives from business parameters that a transportation planning manager establishes for the system and from carrier availability and rate table information provided by external or fleet carriers. The information provided by the transportation manager may include, for example, policies or operational requirements that his/her ~~his/or~~ particular company follows. Using all of this information, the problem-solver performs various planning decisions before reaching an optimal transportation plan. The problem-solver may consolidate various orders and shipments into transportation loads.

Then, a determination is made for each load as to the best shipping mode (carrier, equipment type, route, etc.) and routes that meet delivery time requirements and other business constraints are built. Lowest-cost alternatives are then identified to make the planned freight movements. Throughout the above functions, the problem-solver generates the most efficient load consolidations and makes the least-costly carrier and private fleet assignments within the constraints imposed by the orders and the transportation planning manager.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 17, line 25 (which corresponds to paragraph [0039] in the application's publication document) as follows:

A location interface 307, again preferably connected to the locations (312, 314 and 316) electronically, provides remote locations on a transportation network or supply chain with a direct mechanism to submit new and/or modified information pertaining to the ability of locations to handle orders, including whether they can stock new items, as well as the ~~asthe~~ current quantities of items in stock. The problem-solver logic 301 takes all these information streams and stores them in a central PS database 302 for later use whenever an optimization batch is run. Additionally, a manager interface 304 also allows a central transportation manager 309 or administrator to set process or business rules that are additionally stored in the database 302. Whenever a optimization batch is run in the problem-solver module 300, the current information regarding the carrier's orders locations and management rules stored in PS database 302 is accessed and utilized to compile various potential transportation delivery solutions with all orders having several alternative routes compiled therefor (if more than one route is physically possible). The problem-solver logic 301 then, using carrier rate tables stored in PS database 302, calculates an expected cost for each alternative route and selects the lowest cost route for each order as the proposed optimized solution. These proposed optimized solutions, known as "routed orders" 311, are sent via the routed order interface ("ROI") 303 to down-stream systems (or

alternatively directly to the transportation planning manager via manager interface 304 if he desires to have manual inputs on the proposed solutions). The primary output of the problem-solving module 300 is the routing order interface 303. The downstream systems according to preferred embodiments of the present invention include the execution module 400 of FIG. 4 and the freight payment module 500 of FIG. 5 as herein disclosed.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 23, line 31 (which corresponds to paragraph [0050] in the application's publication document) as follows:

The freight payment module 500 as depicted in FIG. 5 receives this flat file of executed orders 409 from the EX module 400 via the executed freight movement interface 503 [[504]] whenever particular freight movements have been completed. The freight payment ("FP") logic 501 then processes invoices received, preferably electronically via carrier invoice interface 505, from the carriers 322 (if the carrier was a public carrier for hire) and allocates shipment costs to customers 320 or to sales offices 318 [[381]] depending upon from where the a given order originated. The processed invoices are then compared against the costs predicted by the problem-solver module (these costs being stored the EX database 402 and passed to the FP module 500 for storage in the FP database 502 upon completion of the freight movement) and results of this comparison are stored for later analysis. Invoices can then be passed on to the customer 320 or sales office 318 (preferably electronically via customer invoices interface 508) for final bill collection.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 33, line 11 (which corresponds to paragraph [0070] in the application's publication document) as follows:

For freight movements comprising such built trailer loads, the early depart time for the trailer is set to the latest of the early depart times for the shipments on the

trailer and the late depart time for the trailer is set to the earliest of the late depart times for the shipments on the trailer. The combined trailer built through this process is then submitted as a proposed solution to the rating algorithms of the PS module. If the combined shipment offers a cost savings over the individual shipments, the combined shipment is sent through the ROI ~~POI~~ and the individual shipments are discarded and vice versa.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 35, line 31 (which corresponds to paragraph [0074] in the application's publication document) as follows:

In order to process MLRs efficiently, the PS logic only utilizes such proposed MLR routes stored in the PS database as opposed to considering every possible multiple through-point route for every load. These proposed MLR routes are entered by the transportation planning manager prior to the running of a particular PS module batch and are based upon the transportation planning manager's knowledge of his or her particular supply chain. Therefore, whenever the PS module runs, the following choices of routes will be considered for every possible freight delivery: a **[[**an**]]** MLR for each possible combination of proposed MLR legs within a particular order's lane, a one-stop route through any of the PS defined regular through points set up on the order's lane, and a direct route from the origination point to the destination point.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 51, line 6 (which corresponds to paragraph [0113] in the application's publication document) as follows:

Once received, carriers can review tender offers and electronically provide an acceptance or decline (the EX monitoring this acceptance/decline communication at step 606) of the tender offer to the execution module 400 via response interface 412. The EX logic can then re-route any declined orders back to the problem-solver module 300 as unexecuted orders 411 through unexecuted freight

movement interface 410 for selection of a different carrier or transportation solution. As shown in the figure at 607, the EX logic decides whether to send the order back to 607 for re-routing (if there is no response after a preset time or if the tender was declined) or to try re-sending the tender to the carrier (such as to give a carrier a second chance to respond to the tender). The EX logic updates the status for the plan's shipments in databases and waits for shipment completion notices at step 605.